



" proBITS "

an occasional publication
from the

PROBUS CLUB
HORLEY & DISTRICT

issue 14
May 2021

INTRODUCTION

"proBITS" is published for Probus Members. It is our response to the Covid-19 or Corona Virus, being the cause to postpone our lunch meetings until further notice. The Committee of *Probus Club Horley & District* wants to stay in touch with the Members and for the Members to stay in touch with each other. It is very important, in the situation we find ourselves in, to be "connected". Complete isolation from our friends/family is a dangerous thing. The vast majority of our Members have access to email and those without will receive "proBITS" in printed form. Hopefully, they'll submit their words of wisdom in a more traditional manner, like delivery by hand, snailmail or even pigeonpost ! Contributors also receive a print.

The "proBITS" newsletter can only exist successfully with the cooperation of all Members concerned, that must be obvious to everybody. I plead therefore with all Members to make a contribution, however small.

The email address for "proBITS" contributions is :
jpd1.probus@icloud.com

As a guideline : maximum about 850 words for a 2 page spread.

If pics submitted, deduct 30 words per pic.

Text in plain A4 Word document/email.

Pics sent *separately*, in JPG or JPEG format,
NOT embedded in your document.

Please note : your copy may be edited !

If you submit early enough you'll receive a proof print.

Please email or mail your contribution for the next issue, to be received *before the end of the month*. Each edition will land in your mailbox on the first Tuesday of the month. Many organisations publicise a newsletter of some sort to their members. Virtually all of them struggle to get pages filled. I really hope that the ProBus Club of Horley & District, with all its Members having (had) interesting professional lives and interests, will prove to be an exception to the rule. And no, you can't use the excuse that you don't have the time

There's no need to wait - you can submit NOW !

Remember that the [weblinks](#) and [email addresses](#) that appear in the proBITS "on-line" edition can be accessed by simply clicking them on your screen.

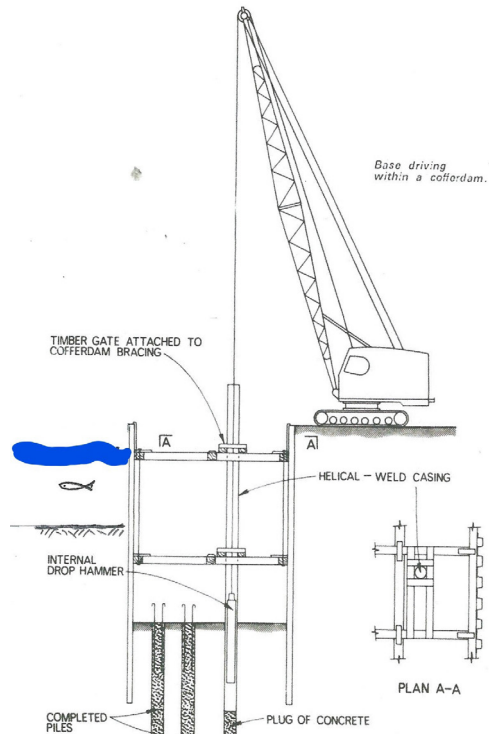
Photo of the month
will YOURS be on page 3 in the next issue ?



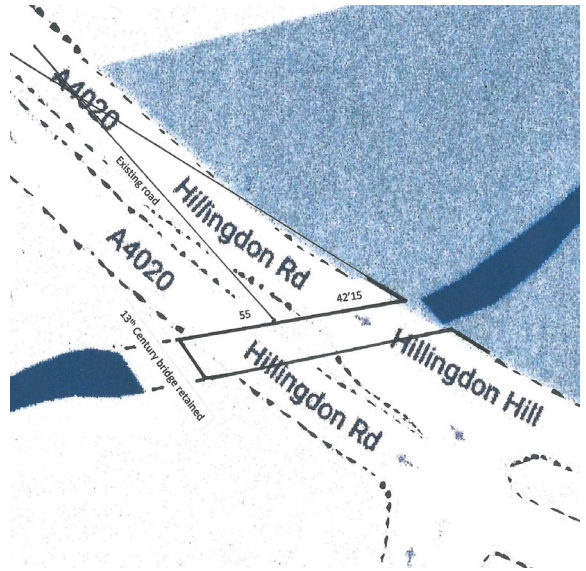
© Roy Page

A bridge too far (out of position)

About fifty-five years ago I was sent to a small bridge site near Uxbridge to sort out why work had stopped. The personalities involved were not speaking to each other and avoiding the issue that the cofferdams in which the abutments, to support the bridge deck are built, were two feet too far apart. "Dodgy", the Resident Engineer acting for the client, had designed the project but was only on site to achieve his qualifications and not very keen to leave his office. Bill, the Site Agent was a chap who had a wealth of experience but was not very active and spent the day sitting in his chair puffing at his pipe. He had lost his right arm in a childhood shotgun accident but remarkably drove a standard Morris 1100 down the M1 each day to work. He changed gear by leaning on the steering wheel to keep the car steady. Out on site was Mangan the General Foreman, a very intimidating character. Building general foremen normally came from the more intelligent tradesmen but civil general foremen were often promoted from labourers because their fists were larger than their brains. Amusingly, whenever visitors came to site, Mangan would parade around with a level and tripod on his shoulder, pretending he knew how to use it. All the lads on-site were Irish, long-term employees of the company. Great workers but a little prone to Guinness. Having found a wad of the calculations made originally to set out the bridge by running a traverse around the adjoining golf course, I sat up most of the night, with the drawings and calcs, spread out on my dining room table. This was before calculators and all had to be manually added up using seven figure log tables. In the middle of the night, I realised that this was all a waste of time and that the problem could be solved by a simple bit of schoolboy maths called the co-sign or sign formulae. After all this time, I still remember the two angles : 55 degrees and 42 degrees



15 minutes. Off to work again at 05.30 with a spring in my step ! A new wall of Larsen 2 piles was driven outside the incorrect line fairly easily but chaos continued as there was no firm ground for the structure to sit on. The first attempt at piling, by a subcontractor, failed with the kit ending up in the water. The second, using driven steel tube piles by ourselves worked well but gave me a bit of a literal headache. I had to kneel down in waders, in a puddle, several feet below water table. I was in a steel sheet piled box measuring the set, (movement) achieved by each drop of the three-ton drop hammer. As the piling finished and we were about to start formwork, two of the crawler crane drivers who I knew well, (In slack times I used to ask drivers to teach me how



to drive their machines, - great fun), asked me, "Prof.(my nickname) we have to lose to Mangan at cards every pay day, can you help ? I replied, "no but I have a foreman carpenter called Jack Shepherd coming on Monday who can." Jack Shepherd was a giant of a man, with a face like an angry raptor and after we first met he told me that I was a cocky little squirt but seemed to know what I was doing. Two more jobs together and we were a team. Jack at my request, joined in the card game next pay day, causing Mangan to take sick leave, from which he never returned. Old Bill was so relieved at losing him that he even popped out of his chair to see what was going on ! A couple of years later when I moved across to become a General Foreman, Jack became my wingman. When you are seen as too young for the job, the roughs tend to take a pop at you. At the sound of raised voices Jack would appear with his catchphrase, "Do you want me to give the "chap" a spanking gov." Unfortunately, this could sometimes be embarrassing as when he carried a terrified middle aged man into my office, suspended at arm's length, by the hood of his anorak ."Caught this geezer snooping round the site gov, do you..... etc." My answer was "No, please put the gentleman down - he is the Borough Architect !"

contributed by Roy O'Donnell

A vaccine insight.

The science is done, the clinical trials a stunning success and regulatory approval is given by the MHRA for administration to humans. You attend the surgery for your injection and there awaits a tray containing a vial and syringe and a trained health care assistant ready to inoculate you. So how does a solution containing the vaccine reach you? The following gives some insight to the practical manufacturing hurdles that need to be overcome before the needle goes in. Basic principles for sterile manufacture, controlled by quality guidelines enforceable by law, have not changed since my retirement from active service as a pharmaceutical consultant in 2015. Any substance injected into soft tissue such as an arm bypasses the body's defence mechanisms that deal with pathogens which is the term given to the micro-organisms which cause diseases. Therefore, it is crucial that any injection is free from such contamination referred to as a bioburden. The last thing a sick person needs is an extra threat to a body already in distress. There are three main production phases.

- The formulation preparation which involves producing a solution containing stabilizers, preservatives and probably an additive capable of permitting what is predominantly an aqueous solution to pass through fatty tissues into the circulatory system.
- The vial filling phase where solution is injected into vials followed by stoppering and seal crimping, all as seen on TV as they whizz round a turntable.
- Labelling with an expiry date and lot number followed by packing ready for storage and distribution. Solution preparation and filling must be carried out under clean room conditions, which are constantly monitored for compliance with ISO Standard 14644. This stipulates the maximum number of dust particles greater than 0.5 microns per cubic foot and micro-organisms per cubic meter. The rooms must be under positive pressure with respect to the outer area thus preventing the ingress of dirty air. These rooms must also be capable of a minimum number of 20 air changes per hour. All this is achieved by a top-class ventilation system, with extremely efficient air filters, located in the ceiling. A crucial part of the quality system therefore includes regular preventative maintenance and testing of the system, together with continuous monitoring. Personnel are fully gowned, wearing face masks and gloves which are all steam sterilised before use. Room entry is via an air lock which itself must comply with clean room standards. Vessels used in manufacture must undergo a thorough validated cleaning procedure followed by a sanitisation process. The vessel used in the actual vaccine solution preparation must firstly undergo a final sterilisation (usually by steam). The process development and validation resulting in a stable effective product must have been an immense effort. Immediately before filling into vials, the vaccine undergoes a filtration process designed to remove the

very few micro-organisms still present. Prior to use, the vials and stoppers a heat treated in order to remove surface endotoxin contaminants.(complex organic debris from dead micro-organisms which may cause high fever). The LAL test for absence of endotoxins using horseshoe crab serum was alluded to by Brian Monk in an earlier proBITS issue. This whole filling process must be validated by a media filling test. Here a dummy run of some 5,000 vials using a microbial growth promoting solution is carried out. If any two show signs of microbial growth, the filling process is deemed suspect and must be re-validated. All this and I have not touched on the production of ultra-pure water needed, any in process testing, the acquisition and testing of raw materials and components and inventory control. For those who have stuck with me to the end, you may wish to browse the web for “EudraLex” chapter four, Sterile Annexe. Tough reading which will right any wrongs in this offering.

contributed by John Startup

https://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/eudralex/vol-4_en

Behind the (Iron) Curtain

In October 1971, the three friends and I who were living and working in Frankfurt (W. Germany), had a weekend break in Berlin. The Cold War was ongoing so we decided to have a day sightseeing in East Berlin. Renting a car, our first encounter with the East German regime was at Checkpoint Charlie. Cars were admitted, by the phalanx of armed guards, one at a time and halted alongside what looked like a wooden shed with a raised walkway. We had to get out of the car, mount the walkway and hand our passports through a slot in a ticket office type window. We then had to proceed the length of the walkway to a second “ticket office” window where, after some minutes, our passports were returned (presumably after having been copied). The regulations required each visitor passing through the checkpoint to exchange at least five Deutschmarks (DM, the West German currency) into five Ostmarks (OM, the currency of the Democratic

Republic of Germany, i.e. East Germany). The actual exchange rate at that time was about four Ostmarks to one Deutschmark so you can see what a nice, not-so-little, earner that was for the East Germans. So, together with our passports we each handed over five DM and received back with the passport five OM. Only then, and after our car had been searched, were we allowed into East Berlin. How drab and



Checkpoint Charlie

colourless it was ! Very little traffic, as most individuals couldn't afford a car. Those we saw were mostly the tinny, noisy and dirty Trabants. On the East side of the Brandenburg Gate, at the start of Unter den Linden (what should have been the grandest avenue in Europe) was the main Trabant showroom. Looking through the large plate glass showroom windows, it was quite clear just how badly built they were. A gap between the front wheel arch panel and the door was very visible and an attempt was made to cover it with paint which, as it had dried, left alarming holes - and this was their showroom car ! Along the avenue was a perfume shop, with bottles which had been so long in the window that they were half empty through evaporation. All the labels and packaging were of brown paper and there was no advertising, so no colour at all ! After visiting the tomb of the unknown soldier and watching the goose-stepping changing of the guard, we were hungry. Where could we find a restaurant or even an Imbiss (snack bar)? Nowhere, except the Ratskeller (town hall basement). In we trooped to find the vast majority of the diners were in uniform - police, army and who knows what else. Menu items were priced in OM and cheap by Western standards. However, anything worthwhile was around ten OM and, of course, we had only five OM each. The waiter, probably in his thirties, came over. Speaking German, we explained our predicament. He realised we were visitors from the West and not German. Looking around, I presume to make sure he was not overheard, he leaned into our group and, from behind the back of his hand said, in English, "We take any currency here". Surprised, but relieved, we enjoyed a filling bratwurst and sauerkraut lunch and left behind a happy, well DM-tipped waiter, having each paid with the five OM and the excess in DM, at one to one of course ! After an afternoon seeing more dull buildings and streets, which were almost empty, the six p.m. return deadline and nightfall was fast approaching. Finding a checkpoint in the dark back to West Berlin, there was momentary confusion and alarm when we were told we couldn't go through ! It wasn't Checkpoint Charlie and we had to go out the same way we came in. Getting there, with only minutes to spare, the exit procedure was just like the entrance, in reverse, with the additional "thrill" of seeing a mirror on wheels poked under our car, presumably to check we had no fleeing East Germans hanging on ! Back in the bustle of West Berlin, the most striking thing was the brightness and colour of all the advertising and shops and the crowds of people. What a contrast. We didn't go back. No wonder the people got fed up and the Wall eventually fell !

contributed by Mike Livesey

Always be careful of strangers at your door

- Always ask for identification before letting someone in to your house. Never let any stranger in, including sales people or charity collectors unless you're expecting them

- Never agree to sign a contract with a tradesman or hand over funds until you speak with a trusted friend or relative

- The bank or police will never send someone to a house to collect money, bank cards, PIN or cheque book or goods

- Never disclose personal information or bank details to a stranger who knocks at the door

- If you feel pressured by an unexpected visitor, take their details and ask them to leave. Call the police if they refuse

- If you've been visited by someone suspicious and don't know what to do, ask a trusted friend or relative for help, or speak to your bank or the police

Always be careful when answering calls from strangers

- Your bank, the police or any other trusted company will never call and ask you to transfer money to another bank account to protect your money from fraud. Hang up.

- Remember that someone calling pretending to be from your bank, the police or another trusted company will always sound professional.

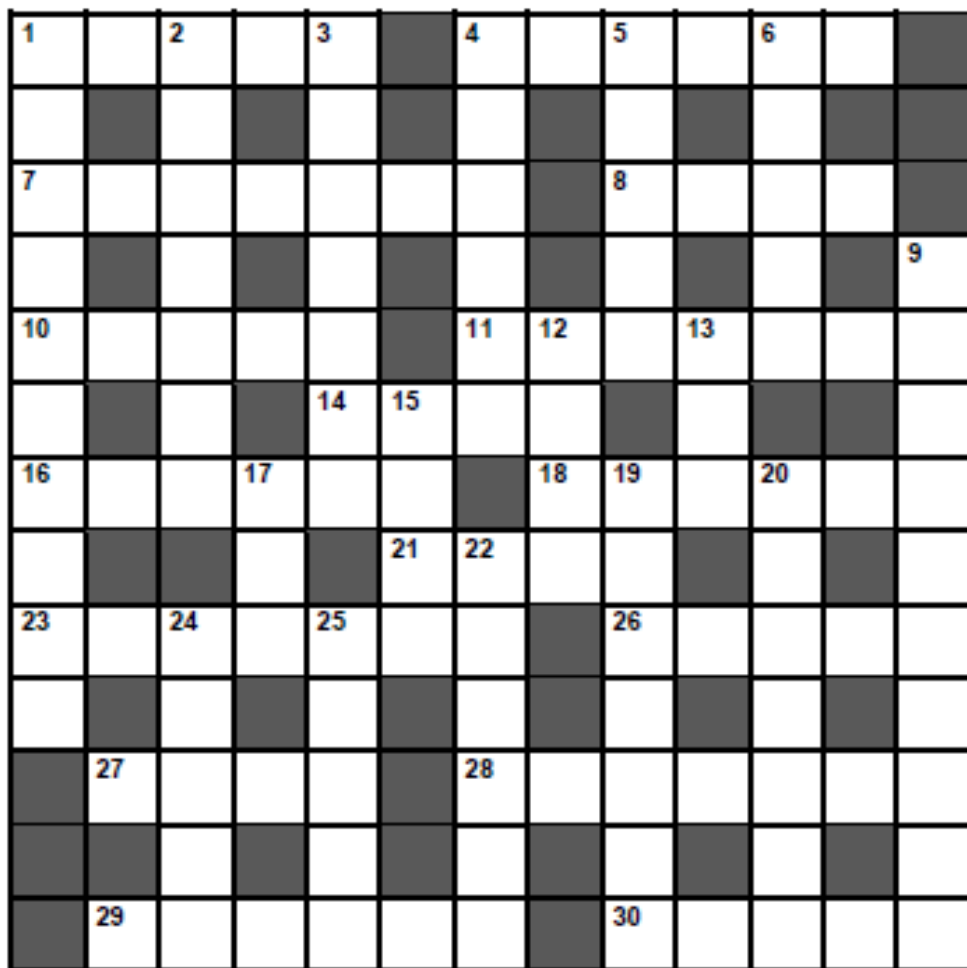
- If you're suspicious about a caller, don't respond. Call back later on a number you obtain for the company yourself. Use a different phone if you can.

- Never disclose personal or bank details to a caller such as your address, PIN, passwords or authorisation codes. Hang up.

- If you feel pressured by a caller, hang up.

- After a suspicious call, ask a trusted friend or relative for help. You can call the phone number on your bank statement if you're still worried.

Page Ten Teaser



Across :

- 1 - Plant an insect before the French. (5)
- 4 - Soft fabric secured by Captain Marvel (veteran superhero). (6)
- 7 - Initially trace revealing article into this old revolutionary turncoat. (7)
- 8 - Wise men seated in the magistrates court. (4)
- 10 - Duck out of sight in the East End, so we hear. (5)
- 11 - One girl replaced in Shakespearean drama. (7)
- 14 - Yours truly deceives an idol. (4)
- 16 - Subdivision of a big spread. (6)
- 18 - Troupe in front of the French stronghold. (6)

- 21 - Help with a wager, perhaps ? (4)
- 23 - TV western had wire version. (7)
- 26 - Large mammal is right at home in Head Office. (5)
- 27 - Poet is refused entry, we hear. (4)
- 28 - Surprisingly apt clue for Shakespearean family. (7)
- 29 - Time of year to dry timber, possibly ? (6)
- 30 - Grass from southern border. (5)

Down :

- 1 - Better bang ground for a slice of cake ! (10)
- 2 - An excellent degree is relative. (7)
- 3 - Come into one caught in the guts. (7)
- 4 - Fierce female artist in Spanish city. (6)
- 5 - A fruit eaten by cheeky little monkey. (5)
- 6 - Willing note to a good monarch. (5)
- 9 - Flying insect in a coloured container. (10)
- 12 - No return to church on one occasion only. (4)
- 13 - Greek goddess of incredible ostentation. (3)
- 15 - Commonwealth help all democrat-ic leaders in central Africa. (4)
- 17 - Sounds like eastern drama is rejected. (3)
- 19 - The fate of fresh rat poos. (7)
- 20 - Stumble over a light three times. (7)
- 22 - Could be a hoax warning signal. (6)
- 24 - Take a meandering path ? Sounds like the two of us have ! (5)
- 25 - Watercourse in a highly industrialised area. (5)

SOLUTION proBITS 13 - April 21 :

Across : 1 - Pignut, 4 - Counts, 7 - Alison, 9 - Rebuffs, 12 - Tahoe, 13 - Right, 15 - Tacks, 16 - Aisle, 17 - Ennui, 18 - Legit, 19 - Netball, 23 - Assist, 24 - Insist, 25 - Peddle.

Down : 1 - Plantation, 2 - Graphic Art, 3 - Universe, 4 - Cone, 5 - Ur-du, 6 - Taff, 8 - Originals, 10 - Farsighted, 11 - Streetwise, 14 - Tailpipe, 20 - Even, 21 - Bali, 22 - Last.

Interesting ?

The Complete Encyclopedia Britannica used to be banned in Texas because it contains instructions for home brewing.

Where Am I ? (Cricket in Berlin)

In the early seventies, a number of us English expats in Frankfurt (W Germany) formed a cricket club. How that came about, recruiting members, getting the kit and a field and pitch to play on is another story. Through British diplomatic contacts, in the summer of 1973 we were invited by the Berlin Brigade Sergeants' Mess to a weekend of cricket in Berlin. We were to be accommodated in British army residential units and play two matches (one each on Saturday and Sunday) against the Sergeants' Mess team. To enable as many of our members as possible to enjoy the experience we travelled to Berlin by train (much less expensive than by air) on the Friday evening. Of course, the train had to pass through East Germany. Prominent notices on the train reminded us that it was "Streng Verboten" (strictly forbidden) for anyone to leave the train, even if halted, before it reached the Berlin Hauptbahnhof. At the border between West and East Germany, East German customs officials and soldiers boarded the train to inspect our passports. Everyone was given a transit permission "ticket", filled out with the details on our passports, to be handed back on the return journey. The British sector of Berlin included the Olympic grounds and it was in the shadow of this iconic stadium where the army had their cricket field, with a matting wicket laid into the grass. A fantastic and scenic venue but, not having played on such a wicket before, we were somewhat disadvantaged. Nevertheless on the Saturday, our first eleven put up a good fight and, in spite of the Mess team having the army's leading fast bowler, lost by only two wickets. A memorable night, courtesy of the Sergeants' mess (where the hosts were the only ones permitted to pay for the very inexpensive drinks !) was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The Sunday match featured most of our second string and we were well beaten. However, I think most minds were on another wonderful evening-to-come as our return train journey was scheduled for the Monday morning. But not for me. A phone call from my office required me to return urgently that evening for an emergency audit on Monday. The company had already booked the plane ticket. All I had to do was a quick pack of my overnight bag, hasty thanks and goodbyes to our hosts and turn up at Tegel airport. Tegel, now disused, is in what was then West Berlin. Flying into or out of Tegel then did not involve any part of East Germany. Consequently, I returned to Frankfurt still in possession of my transit permission "ticket". Somewhere in Stasi files, long stored away and forgotten, therefore, I am one of probably many who went into Berlin during the Cold War - and never came out !

contributed by Mike Livesey

As we approach the exam season, here are a couple of howlers :

- Name the Peace Treaty which settled the war in 1919 ?
A : the EEC
- The pelvis protects the genetics.
- What is an animal with a backbone called ?
A : a vibrator.
- How can people conserve the environment ?
A : shoot trespassers.
- Give an example where the expansion of a solid causes problems and say how it is overcome. A : your fingernails grow and need cutting.
- Why can a bird sit on a high voltage cable without getting an electric shock ? A : the bird's feet are coated with rubber.
- What does the sickle on the Russian flag stand for ?
A : chopping people's heads off.
- Sir Francis Drake played with his bowels while the Armada sailed up the Channel.
- Magellan circumcised the world in his 40-foot clipper.
- The Pope could not marry Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon so Henry started the Protestant religion and married his self.
- Joan of Arc was condomed to death.
- An Arab is a man with a turbine on his head.
- State one change in boys at puberty ?
A : There vice deepens.
- What is migration ?
A : It is a headache that birds get when they fly south for winter.
- North Sea Gas has been found in Morecambe Bay.
- As he grew older Wordsworth went out one evening because he felt the call of nature.
- The light is focused on to the rectum at the back of the eye by the lens.
- Write down some way in which radioactive materials can be useful to human beings. A : Atomic bomb.
- Margarine is better for you (than butter) because it spreads easily.
My mother uses it to go into her bonking.
- The eyes of James I were always wandering around.
His long thin beard helps him do this.
- Exams do put enormus stains on you.

Highlighting a Local Club or Organisation.

Horley U3A Club.

The Horley Branch was founded in 1995 and is one of over 1,000 of U3A Clubs up and down the country. The object of the U3A movement is to provide opportunities for people who are retired or semi-retired, but want to go on learning just for the pleasure of it. There are no formal courses or qualifications, all our learning is done in a relaxed atmosphere and we have many social activities as well. As a small U3A with just 120 members, we are able to provide a more intimate environment so it's a great place to make new friends. The U3A is entirely run by its own members and we all help each other learn. In normal times we have a monthly meeting with a paid speaker at the Regent Hall in Albert Road in Horley. We also have a number of interest groups on various subjects that meet regularly, usually in members' homes, on subjects such as Play-Reading, History and Philosophy. Other groups arrange visits to places of interest, gardens or countryside walks. It's open to any member to start up a new group if the interest is there. Of course, during the pandemic, we have not been able to hold our usual meetings and we have had to explore different ways of learning. Online facilities such as Zoom video conferencing and YouTube have been very helpful in this regard. It may have been a steep learning curve for all



A couple of years ago Horley U3A members paid a visit to the BBC studio and had a go at "doing the weather forecast". They got it *almost* right.....

of us, but it's been pleasing to see how many of our members have risen to the challenge. New things are starting all the time. We have recently begun online poetry afternoons, with members reading their favourite poems and others tuning in just to listen. We have started a number of alternative ways of running existing interest groups and formed new groups online including a very popular Improv Workshop and Beginners Welsh. We made two interactive whodunnits, and had a highly recommended talk on the Bayeux Tapestry in April. More online talks will follow in the coming months. One positive aspect of online working is that it has broken down geographical barriers and encouraged U3As to work together, wherever they are based, giving all our members more choice. We hope such online learning opportunities will continue and grow over the coming years, in addition to all the usual talks and groups. It's going to be a few more months before we get back to normal but in the meantime we'd like to invite any Horley & District Probus Members to join in our online activities at no charge. More info on our website.

contributed by Cher & Jim Palmer of Horley U3A

email : horleyu3ahub@gmail.com

website : www.u3asites.org.uk/horley

Our next ZOOM talk is on Tue-11-04.

We have Brad Ashton giving a talk titled "Job of a Laughtime". This is about the fun Brad had writing material for top comedians including Tommy Cooper, Les Dawson, Dick Emery, Frankie Howerd, Bruce Forsyth, Hylda Baker, Hattie Jacques, David Frost and Bob Monkhouse. Members are asked to connect from 10:45 onwards. Our speaker will commence his talk promptly at 11:00. Members will receive the ZOOM link in an email on the morning of the talk. It would be very helpful if you could let Steve know in advance that you plan to attend. The connecting link is also available by clicking here :

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81485998691?pwd=b2o1djdxMEt6UC9vM1pLa1ZEU0xZQT09> or from the Probus Website, where you will now find a new tab "MEMBER AREA". Click on this and enter the WebPassword from your email. Select ZOOM MEETING LINKS, then select CLICK HERE on the line of this month's meeting. We will use the same system as last time for questions. During the course of the talk members can submit questions at any time by using the "Chat" button on the Zoom screen, selecting John De Lang as the recipient and typing in their question. John will then put as many of these as time allows to our speaker at the end of his talk. Any member who has not yet participated in a ZOOM talk and would like to do a trial run, or have any questions regarding using ZOOM, please contact Steve Challis or me."

John Alsop

And finally...

Even in these dark days there are still enough reasons to celebrate !

In May we pay tribute to the parents of the following people :

Brian Monk & Jeremy Vevers arrived on the 1st,
although I don't think that they had organised this.

On the 21st Bob Smith saw the light of day.

On the 27th Ian Bowring increased his family with one.

Max Hofmann chose the 30th to appear.

Give them a ring and say "Happy Birthday" !

Please let us know if your birthday is also in May but is not mentioned.

The editor always has the last word.....

I would like to say a very warm "thank you" to those people who have,
with their contributions, made this issue of proBITS possible - take a bow !

Contributions for the next issue are very welcome (if not essential) - and you
still have enough time on your hands ! More details on page 2.

Receipt *before* the end of this month would be much appreciated.
It gives (just) enough time to prepare the next issue.